

**DATE:** February 13, 2019

**TO:** Nels R. Leutwiler, President  
Preservation Foundation Board of Directors

**FROM:** Jim Anderson, Director of Natural Resources  
Rebekah Snyder, Executive Director

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend approval of a \$26,316 grant from unrestricted funds to continue volunteer stewardship engagement at greenbelt forest preserve

**FINANCIAL DATA:** As of December 31, 2018, the foundation had a total of \$240,507 in unrestricted funds.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2015, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) secured a \$100,000 grant from the Illinois Coastal Program to restore Greenbelt Forest Preserve and to begin to develop a volunteer stewardship corps that will continue to support the District’s restoration efforts at this preserve. To achieve the second goal, the District engaged Audubon-Great Lakes (Audubon), a regional office of National Audubon Society, as partner in the grant application. Audubon received \$20,000 of the \$100,000 grant and provided \$16,500 in matching funds.

From October 2015 through April 2017, Audubon engaged individuals and organizations through off-site educational events, hosted on-site educational and restoration events, and hosted monthly volunteer stewardship workdays that included invasive brush cutting and burning, hand-pulling invasives, seed collecting and planting, shrub planting, and bird walks. They achieved the following results:

Stewardship: October 2015-April 2017	
Restoration workdays	19
Participants	384
Volunteer hours	1,088
Organizations engaged	36

In May 2017, the Preservation Foundation approved a one-year, \$20,000 grant to continue working with Audubon through June 2018. The second year of this work continued volunteer stewardship development and incorporated a new outreach strategy to engage communities of color around Greenbelt through Audubon’s Wild Indigo Nature Explorations program (Wild Indigo). From April 2017 through June 2018, Audubon Great Lakes achieved the following results:

Stewardship + Wild Indigo: April 2017 – June 2018	
Events	63
Participants	1,159
Volunteer Hours	1,987
Organizations Engaged	40

Since 2018, Audubon Great Lakes has continued to host volunteer workdays and reach out to the community through Wild Indigo programming using the agency's own resources. To sustain this effort and continue building connections within the North Chicago and Waukegan communities, the District requests a one-year grant from the Preservation Foundation to renew our contract with Audubon Great Lakes.

**Need:** Greenbelt serves as the major public greenspace for tens of thousands of nearby residents of North Chicago and Waukegan, two highly diverse communities. While Greenbelt is known for cultural events and recreation opportunities, the District has not been able to develop a corps volunteer stewardship community, which has been so important to our restoration efforts at preserves such as Grant Woods, Grassy Lake, Ryerson Woods, and others. In continuing our work with Audubon, the District hopes to translate the cultural visibility of Greenbelt into sustained ecological stewardship to support long-term restoration and management goals.

**Deliverables:** In 2019, Audubon proposes to sharpen the strategic integration of Wild Indigo engagement and the volunteer stewardship development in order to create a sustainable, volunteer-led stewardship group that reflects the communities surrounding Greenbelt.

Audubon staff will:

- Lead 12-18 volunteer stewardship workdays
- Attract at least 250 stewardship volunteer
- Achieve at least 750 hours of service
- Engage at least 10 partner organizations in on-site stewardship
- Host 12-18 Wild Indigo Nature Explorations both within Greenbelt and off-site to build bridges between the community and Greenbelt
- Connect at least 700 Wild Indigo participants to local nature
- Develop relationships with 25 community-based partner organizations

Wild Indigo staff will also begin coordinating quarterly core partner meetings. The partner meetings will serve the purpose of combining existing stewardship leaders with diverse Wild Indigo community leaders in order to help bridge the existing gap between the two. Through discussions of challenges and best practices in engagement and stewardship, and through the opportunity of collaborative event planning, Audubon seeks to help facilitate an outdoor resource fair at Greenbelt. The resource fair (which will be marketed as a "Community Open House") will be designed to attract at least 100 attendees from Greenbelt's neighbors. We will connect attendees to the various conservation and recreation organizations active in the Waukegan/North Chicago/Zion communities and the multitude of opportunities to engage meaningfully at Greenbelt and other nearby natural areas.

Lastly, in addition to the monthly Wild Indigo recreation and Greenbelt stewardship days, the two strands of this effort will come together to co-develop at least one large-scale, collaborative event focusing on shrub/tree planting and/or seed collecting/spreading that will compliment and reinforce the efforts of bridging restoration with informal education and outdoor recreation. For this event, we hope to recruit at least 100 attendees that will help plant over 300 native shrubs and trees and strengthen the ties between Wild Indigo participants and the volunteer stewards active at Greenbelt.

There is a strong corps of dedicated volunteers at Greenbelt, some of which have attended workdays monthly since April 2016. It is the District's belief that with another year or two of funding, this

corps can develop into a self-sustaining stewardship group that can operate at the site independently of Audubon.

**Budget**

<b>Income</b>	Audubon GL	PFLCFP Funds
Preservation Foundation of Lake County Forest Preserves		\$25,000
Caerus Foundation	\$15,000	
Harold M. & Adeline S. Morrison Family Foundation	\$10,000	
Additional Audubon Funds – Individual Donors		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salary (Community Engagement and Stewardship Associates)	\$15,030	\$21,350
Travel (Staff and event buses)	\$1,500	\$2,000
Event Materials and Printing	\$850	\$1,650
<b>Total Direct</b>	<b>\$17,380</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
Administration (18%)	\$7,620	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

On May 7, 2013, the Preservation Foundation Board of Directors adopted a Policy Regarding Use of Unrestricted Charitable Gifts. The policy instructs the Foundation to maintain a minimum level of operating reserves equal to 10 percent of the Foundation’s annual fundraising and administrative expenses. Proposals must be submitted by a Forest Preserve department director or the executive director. A majority of Foundation board members must approve the proposal for funding to be released. Votes must be indicated in writing, either in person or via email.

**PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Roll Call Vote: Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: \_\_\_\_\_